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Message Text

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E.O. 11652, GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ANGOLA: CUBANS IN CABINDA

A FRENCH BUSINESSMAN BASED IN THE CONGO NEAR THE CABINDA BORDER REPORTED TO EMBASSY LIBREVILLE THE ARRIVAL DURING THE PAST WEEK OF 3,000 FRESH CUBAN TROOPS WHO HEADED OVERLAND INTO CABINDA. IN ADDITION, HE:

--COUNTED 55 TANKS AND SAW LIGHT ARMORED AND SUPPORT VEHICLES;

--CLAIMED THE FLIGHT OF MUCH OF THE CABINDA CIVILIAN POPULATION HAS LEFT THE ENCLAVE FIRMLY IN THE HANDS OF THE CUBAN FORCES. (CONFIDENTIAL) LIBREVILLE 2079, 12/18.)

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2. REBELLION IN ARGENTINA: DEATH THROES OR BIRTH PANGS?

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WHEN THE DECEMBER 18 REBELLION OF ELEMENTS IN THE ARGENTINE AIR FORCE FAILED TO IGNITE SUPPORT FROM THE OTHER MILITARY SERVICES, IT APPEARED TO BE SPUTTERING OUT. HOWEVER, IN A

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION AT 8:30 P.M., DECEMBER 18, POLITICAL COUNSELOR SMITH FOR EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES REPORTED IT NO LONGER CLEAR THAT THE REBELLION HAD DIED. AS OF THAT TIME:

--PLANES WERE DROPPING LEAFLETS CALLING FOR AN END TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

--THE DISSIDENTS HAD NOT YET BEEN CAPTURED OR DETAINED.

--REBELS CONTINUED TO HOLD ONE AIR BASE AT AN INTER-CITY AIRPORT.

LATER PRESS REPORTS FROM BUENOS AIRES INDICATE THE REBEL OFFICERS WILL ATTEMPT TO HOLD OUT UNTIL ARMY COMMANDER JORGE VIDELA IS NAMED PRESIDENT. IN AN EFFORT TO EFFECT A COMPROMISE, INTERIOR MINISTER ROBLEDO ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF BRIGADIER ORLANDO AGOSTI AS AIR FORCE COMMANDER, WHICH COMPROMISE WAS REJECTED BY THE REBEL LEADERS. THE GOVERNMENT ASSERTS THAT IT IS IN FULL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION AND HAS APPEALED FOR CALM. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 8247, 12/18.)

3. KUWAIT PURCHASING ARMS FROM USSR

THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR DECEMBER 18 RELAYED TO AMBASSADOR STOLTZFUS THE GOK FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFIRMATION THAT KUWAIT WILL BUY ARMS FROM THE USSR. WHILE THE FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT SPECIFY EITHER THE QUANTITY OR THE TYPE OF ARMS, HE CLAIMED THAT EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN TECHNICIANS WILL SERVICE THE SOVIET EQUIPMENT WITH THE AID OF ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF SOVIET TECHNICIANS ADMITTED ON AN INDIVIDUAL CONTRACT BASIS.

THE SOVIET COUNSELOR, IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH OUR DCM, DENIED THAT SOVIET TECHNICIANS WILL BE STATIONED IN

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KUWAIT, BUT HE CONFIRMED THE SALE AND ADDED:

--THE PURCHASE WAS MADE WITH HARD CURRENCY.

--ALL TRAINING WILL BE DONE IN THE USSR.

--THE SOVIETS DO NOT THINK THE IRAQIS WILL OBJECT TO THE SALE SINCE THE USSR HAS "FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH

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BOTH COUNTRIES." (SECRET) KUWAIT 5286, 12/18.)

4. MEXICO ON ZIONISM--ALWAYS HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

EMBASSY MEXICO OBSERVES THAT THE ERRATIC ZIGS AND ZAGS OF MEXICAN POLICY ON ZIONISM GROW FROM A FUNDAMENTAL DILEMMA FOR MEXICAN DIPLOMACY. MEXICO CANNOT RECONCILE ITS ASPIRATIONS TO THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP WITH DEPENDENCE ON THE US. THE EMBASSY NOTES THAT IN FORMULATING MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY:

--PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA OFTEN SHOOTS FROM THE HIP WITH LITTLE OR NO ADVICE FROM FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA, WHO IS THEN ASSIGNED THE HUMILIATING TASK OF PICKING UP THE PIECES WHEN THINGS GO WRONG.

--ECHEVERRIA'S AMBITION TO BECOME UN SECRETARY GENERAL DREW HIM INTO MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS, SINCE HE DREAMED OF AN " IMPARTIAL" MEXICAN ROLE IN DEALING WITH BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS.

PRESSURE BY THE USG ON THE ZIONISM ISSUE, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES, WAS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. WHAT FINALLY MADE ECHEVERRIA EAT HUMBLE PIE WAS THE ANGER OF MEXICAN BUSINESSMEN FACED WITH UNCERTAINTY ABOUT DEVELOPMENT DOLLARS, AN INCIPIENT BOYCOTT OF MEXICAN GOODS IN THE US, AND THE LOSS OF UP TO SEVENTY PERCENT OF THEIR MOST AFFLUENT WINTER TOURISTS. EVEN AFTER HIS TWISTS AND TURNS, INCLUDING HIS STATEMENT TO JEWISH LEADERS IN MEXICO THAT THE UNGA VOTE WAS MISUNDERSTOOD AND RABASA'S SEEKING FORGIVENESS IN ISRAEL, ECHEVERRIA MAY STILL NOT BE OUT OF THE WOODS. MEXICO'S SUPPORT FOR THE UN RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR BROUGHT THE ZIONISM ISSUE TO THE FORE ONCE AGAIN. (LIMITED OFFICIAL

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USE) MEXICO 11182, 12/18.)

5. KOREA: MAJOR CABINET RESHUFFLE

THE ROK THIS MORNING ANNOUNCED MAJOR CABINET CHANGES. PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG PIL WILL BE REPLACED BY BLUE HOUSE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHO KYU HA. AMBASSADOR TO THE UN PAK TONG CHIN WILL REPLACE KIM TONG JO AS FOREIGN MINISTER. IN ALL, NINE OTHER MINISTRIES--BUT NOT INCLUDING EPB AND DEFENSE--WERE ALSO INVOLVED. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) SEOUL 9761, 12/19.) KISSINGER

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